

## LESSON 6: TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF



*ampule  
bivouac  
chlorine  
disinfect  
dysentery  
galvanized  
hygiene  
iodine  
lice  
personal hygiene  
purified  
sanitation*

### INTRODUCTION

Exercise, rest, and good **hygiene** and nutrition can help you stay healthy and avoid many illnesses and infections. In other words, you can prevent disease and injury by taking good care of yourself. You learned about the importance of nutrition and exercise to your health in the previous section of this text. This section covers the importance of good hygiene habits. In particular, it discusses hygiene and **sanitation** when attending JROTC summer camp or camping on your own, with friends, or family. In these cases, you may not have the modern conveniences of clean, running water or indoor plumbing, but you must still know how to take care of yourself to help prevent illness and maintain good health.

Most likely, there are certain habits that you perform routinely at the start of each day. You are probably so accustomed to doing them that you do not give them a second thought. First, you wake up after resting your body during the night. Then, you shower if you did not shower the night before,

wash your face, and comb your hair. It is now time for breakfast — some toast and cereal perhaps. And, last but not least, you brush your teeth and leave for school.

Now, stop for a minute and think about the activities that we have just described. They involve rest, nutrition, and cleanliness, three elements that are important to maintaining good health and are a part of **personal hygiene**.

It is easy for most of us to practice personal hygiene in our homes where there are sinks, showers, toilets, and clean water, all of which help with sanitation. In some situations, however, practicing personal hygiene and maintaining sanitary conditions take more effort and require greater care. For example, if you are camping, you may have to work harder at hygiene and sanitation depending on conditions at your campsite. Also, when you are staying in close quarters with several other people, like at JROTC summer camp, hygiene and sanitation become extremely important. The poor sanitation or hygiene habits of one person can lead to a disease or illness that affects an entire group.

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The following story illustrates the importance of maintaining all aspects of health and sanitation when out in the field.

On Togatabu Island in 1942, the 14th Artillery and the 404th Engineer Battalions were part of a task force preparing to attack Guadalcanal. Fifty-five percent of the engineers and 65 percent of the artillerymen contracted a disease called “Filariasis,” transmitted by mosquitoes. Both units had to be medically evacuated without seeing any enemy action because they were not combat ready. The use of insect repellent, insecticides, and the elimination of standing water

would have prevented the spread of this disease.

Often in military history, the health of the troops influenced the course of battle more than strategy or tactics. “Historically, in every conflict in which the United States has been involved, only 20 percent of all hospital admissions have been from combat injuries. The other 80 percent have been from diseases and nonbattle injuries.” (*Field Hygiene and Sanitation*, FM 21-10)

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## PERSONAL HYGIENE

### KEEP CLEAN AND DRY

Imagine how you would feel if you did not bathe for a week. Now imagine how others would feel about having to be around you during that time. Uncleanliness or disagreeable odors affect the morale of others, so the solution is for everyone to take personal responsibility for their own hygiene.

A daily bath or shower helps maintain cleanliness and prevent body odor, common skin diseases, and infection. When you are in the field, however, bathing daily may not be possible. In this case, make sure you take a full shower at least once a week (or at the earliest opportunity) and use a washcloth daily to wash:

- Your face
- Your armpits
- Your genital area
- Your feet

- Other areas where you sweat or that become wet, such as between your thighs or, for females, under the breasts.

Powders, such as talcum powder, help to keep your skin dry when in the field. Apply it to places where you tend to sweat, and to your feet and inside your socks each morning, especially if you have had prior foot infections. Change to clean clothing regularly. When outdoors, this will aid in the control of **lice**. Make sure the clothing you wear in the field is loose and does not restrict circulation. Avoid wearing nylon undergarments. Wear cotton, which is more absorbent and allows the skin to dry.

### STAY PHYSICALLY FIT

People who are physically fit are less likely to get sick or injured, so participate regularly in a fitness program. Physical fitness training will also help you become adjusted to a field environment. Remember to use caution when exercising in extremely hot or cold weather.



### GET ENOUGH SLEEP

The average person needs eight hours of sleep a night. Make sure you get enough sleep so you have the energy to effectively complete the required tasks of your day. You may have a harder time sleeping when you are away from home, bunking with others, or

camping. Follow these suggestions to get as much rest as possible.

- Sleep as much as you can before going someplace where you may not be able to sleep comfortably or as much as you should.
- Take catnaps whenever you can, but expect to need a few minutes to wake up fully.
- When in the field, follow your leader's instructions and share tasks with other cadets so everyone gets time to sleep.
- After going without sleep, catch up as soon as possible.
- Learn and practice techniques to relax yourself quickly.

If you have not gotten enough sleep in the field and are required to remain awake and alert, try to follow the suggestions listed below:

- Play mental games or talk with other cadets to stay alert during dull watches or critical jobs such as driving at night.
- Take short stretch breaks or do light exercises in place.
- Do not trust your memory — write things down. Double check your communications and calculations.
- Watch out for your mind playing tricks (like seeing things that are not there) when you are very tired. Check strange observations before acting.

### *LEARN TO REDUCE STRESS*

Stress begins in the mind but causes physical reactions in the body. Although stress can be beneficial in small doses by supplying you with bursts of energy to complete a project on time or compete in an important game, stress that continues over long periods of time can weaken your immune system and lead to exhaustion and illness. People under too much stress may not care for themselves properly or be able to complete tasks effectively.

To keep yourself healthy and efficient, you must learn to relax and reduce stress. The following hints may help.

- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Do not try to do more than is possible or take on tasks for which you are not prepared.
- Talk with friends or family when you encounter difficulties.
- Take time each day to do something that you enjoy, even if it is only for fifteen minutes.
- Do not worry about things that are out of your control, but concentrate on what you *can* do.
- Exercise regularly.
- Recognize that stress is a normal reaction to many situations, like taking a test, giving a speech, or participating in field training. Take a deep breath, relax, and do not let stress interfere with accomplishing the task at hand.

To help reduce stress in a group or among friends or fellow cadets, give each other moral support if things are tough at home, school, or in the unit. Welcome new replace-

ments into your group and be active in establishing friendships. By building a feeling of esprit de corps, you can minimize stressful feelings of loneliness and isolation. When in the field, attempt to care for other cadets and work together to provide everyone food, water, sleep, shelter, and protection from heat, cold, and poor sanitation.

## BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SANITATION

Poor sanitation can contribute to conditions that may result in diarrhea and **dysentery**. Intestinal diseases are usually spread through contact with bacteria and germs in human waste, by flies and other insects, or in improperly prepared food and water supplies.

### USE PURIFIED WATER

When you are staying outdoors, in the field, or traveling in foreign countries with questionable water supplies, use only water that is **purified**. Fill your canteen with treated water at every chance. To treat or **disinfect** water, bring it to a boil for 5 to 10 minutes. When heated water is not available, disinfect water using one of the following methods:

#### 1. *The Preferred Method: Iodine Tablets*

- a. Fill a one-quart canteen with the cleanest water available.
- b. Put one iodine tablet in the water; two in cold or cloudy water. Double these amounts in a two-quart canteen.
- c. Place the cap on the canteen, wait 5 minutes, then shake. Loosen the cap and tip the canteen over to allow leakage around the canteen threads. Tighten the cap and wait an additional 25 minutes before drinking.

#### 2. *Treating with Chlorine*

- a. Fill a one-quart canteen with the cleanest water available.
- b. Mix one **ampule** of chlorine with one-half canteen cup of water. Stir the mixture with a clean device until the contents dissolve. Take care not to cut your hands when breaking open the glass ampule.
- c. Pour one canteen capful of the chlorine solution into your quart of water.
- d. Replace the cap on your canteen and shake. Slightly loosen the cap and tip the canteen over to allow leakage around the threads. Tighten the cap and wait 30 minutes before drinking.

#### 3. *Another Alternative: Tincture of Iodine*

- a. Fill a one-quart canteen with the cleanest water available.
- b. Add 5 drops of 2 percent Tincture of Iodine to the water. If the water is cold or cloudy, add 10 drops.
- c. Mix thoroughly by shaking the canteen. Slightly loosen the cap and tip the canteen over to allow leakage around the threads. Tighten the cap and wait 30 minutes before drinking.
- d. Very cloudy or cold water may require prolonged contact time. Let it stand several hours or overnight if possible.

### GUARD AGAINST FOOD POISONING

Wash your hands for at least 30 seconds after using the bathroom or before touching food. Inspect all cans and food packages prior to using them, and throw away

any cans with leaks, bulges, or holes. Do not eat foods or drink beverages that have been prepared in **galvanized** containers, which may result in zinc poisoning. When camping or in the field, wash your mess kit in a mess kit laundry or with treated water or disinfectant solution.

### *BURY YOUR WASTE*

Always bury your waste immediately to prevent flies from spreading germs from waste to your food. Burying your waste also helps keep unwanted animals out of your **bivouac** area.

## CONCLUSION

Practicing good personal hygiene and sanitation are common sense actions that everyone should perform. They are particularly important in the field where cadets have a responsibility to both themselves and others, and leaders must plan and enforce preventative measures.

Remember, correct cleanliness habits, regular exercise, good nutrition, and adequate amounts of rest and relaxation can directly affect a person's well-being. By practicing these preventative measures, you can significantly reduce time lost due to illness and injuries.